

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEMETRIUS ALVIN BANKS,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	1:19CV14
	)	
OFFICER M. D. MARTINEZ, et al.,	)	
	)	
Defendant(s).	)	

ORDER AND RECOMMENDATION  
OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Plaintiff, a federal prisoner, submitted a pro se complaint under 42 U.S.C. §1983 and requests permission to proceed *in forma pauperis* pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). Plaintiff names M.D. Martinez, an officer with the Winston-Salem Police Department, two unnamed homicide detectives with that Department, the Department itself, and G. Isenhour, a magistrate in Forsyth County, North Carolina, as Defendants. Plaintiff claims that between 8:00 p.m. on May 10, 2015, and 4:00 a.m. on May 11, 2015, Martinez and the homicide detectives illegally chased, arrested, detained, and questioned him before charging him with misdemeanor possession of marijuana and taking him before G. Isenhour, who then set what Plaintiff considers to be an excessive bond of \$16,000. Plaintiff alleges that these actions caused him to serve extra time for state and federal probation violations, to lose certain items of property, and miss the chance to start a family with his significant other. He seeks a total of \$875,352,310 in damages.

Because Plaintiff is “a prisoner seek[ing] redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity,” this Court has an obligation to “review” this

Complaint. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). “On review, the court shall . . . dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if [it] – (1) is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or (2) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

As to the first basis for dismissal, the United States Supreme Court has explained that “a complaint, containing as it does both factual allegations and legal conclusions, is frivolous where it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.” Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). “The word ‘frivolous’ is inherently elastic and not susceptible to categorical definition. . . . The term’s capaciousness directs lower courts to conduct a flexible analysis, in light of the totality of the circumstances, of all factors bearing upon the frivolity of a claim.” Nagy v. Federal Med. Ctr. Butner, 376 F.3d 252, 256-57 (4th Cir. 2004) (some internal quotation marks omitted). As part of this review, the Court may anticipate affirmative defenses that clearly appear on the face of the complaint. Nasim v. Warden, Md. House of Corr., 64 F.3d 951, 954 (4th Cir. 1995) (en banc); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70, 74 (4th Cir. 1983).

The Supreme Court further has identified factually frivolous complaints as ones involving “allegations that are fanciful, fantastic, and delusional. As those words suggest, a finding of factual frivolousness is appropriate when the facts alleged rise to the level of the irrational or the wholly incredible, whether or not there are judicially noticeable facts available to contradict them.” Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 32-33 (1992) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted). In making such findings, this Court may “apply common sense.” Nasim, 64 F.3d at 954.

Alternatively, a plaintiff “fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted,” 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1), when the complaint does not “contain sufficient *factual matter*, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.’” Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (emphasis added) (internal citations omitted) (quoting Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)). “Where a complaint pleads facts that are ‘merely consistent with’ a defendant’s liability, it ‘stops short of the line between possibility and plausibility of ‘entitlement to relief.’”” Id. (quoting Twombly, 550 U.S. at 557). This standard “demands more than an unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation.” Id. In other words, “the tenet that a court must accept as true all of the allegations contained in a complaint is inapplicable to legal conclusions. Threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” Id.<sup>1</sup>

The final ground for dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(2) generally applies to situations in which doctrines established by the United States Constitution or at common law immunize governments and/or government personnel from liability for monetary damages. See, e.g., Pennhurst State Sch. & Hosp. v. Halderman, 465 U.S. 89 (1984) (discussing sovereign

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<sup>1</sup>Although the Supreme Court has reiterated that “[a] document filed *pro se* is to be liberally construed and a *pro se* complaint, however inartfully pleaded, must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers,” Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (internal citations and quotation marks omitted), the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has “not read Erickson to undermine Twombly’s requirement that a pleading contain more than labels and conclusions,” Giarratano v. Johnson, 521 F.3d 298, 304 n.5 (4th Cir. 2008) (internal quotation marks omitted) (applying Twombly standard in dismissing *pro se* complaint); accord Atherton v. District of Columbia Off. of Mayor, 567 F.3d 672, 681-82 (D.C. Cir. 2009) (“A *pro se* complaint . . . ‘must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.’ But even a *pro se* complainant must plead ‘factual matter’ that permits the court to infer ‘more than the mere possibility of misconduct.’” (quoting Erickson, 551 U.S. at 94, and Iqbal, 556 U.S. at 697, respectively)).

immunity of states and state officials under Eleventh Amendment); Pierson v. Ray, 386 U.S. 547 (1967) (describing interrelationship between 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and common-law immunity doctrines, such as judicial, legislative, and prosecutorial immunity). Cf. Allen v. Burke, 690 F.2d 376, 379 (4th Cir. 1982) (noting that, even where “damages are theoretically available under [certain] statutes . . ., in some cases, immunity doctrines and special defenses, available only to public officials, preclude or severely limit the damage remedy”).

For the reasons that follow, the Complaint should be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b) because it is frivolous, because it fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted, and because it seeks monetary damages from a defendant with immunity from such relief.

As an initial matter, the Court notes that Plaintiff is attempting to undermine his state and federal sentences, which he claims were lengthened by the Defendants’ actions. Plaintiff is not permitted to do this without first showing that convictions were reversed on direct appeal, expunged by Executive Order, declared invalid by a state tribunal, or, finally, called into question by a federal court through the issuance of a writ of habeas corpus. Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477 (1994). Plaintiff fails to do so and, therefore, dismissal is proper for this reason alone.

Further, the application of the appropriate statute of limitations is an affirmative defense that the Court may consider in this context. See Eriline Co. S.A. v. Johnson, 440 F.3d 648, 655-56 (4th Cir. 2006) (citing Nasim, 64 F.3d at 955). The statute of limitations in this case is three years. See Wilson v. Garcia, 471 U.S. 261, 276-80 (1985) (holding that, in section 1983 actions, state statute of limitations for personal injury applies); Brooks v. City of Winston

Salem, 85 F.3d 178, 181 (4th Cir. 1996) (applying North Carolina’s three-year statute of limitations for personal injuries to section 1983 actions); N.C. Gen. Stat § 1-52 (establishing three-year statute of limitations for personal injury). A plaintiff’s cause of action accrues, and the statute of limitations runs, from the date on which he “possesses sufficient facts about the harm done to him that reasonable inquiry will reveal his cause of action.” Nasim, 64 F.3d at 955. Here, Plaintiff claims that the events in the Complaint occurred during a few hours on May 10th and 11th of 2015, or well more than three years prior to him filing the present Complaint. Plaintiff would also have been well aware of the events at the time they occurred. His entire Complaint can be dismissed for this reason.

Finally, Plaintiff names a state court magistrate G. Isenhour, as a Defendant. However, judges have absolute immunity for their judicial actions. Stump v. Sparkman, 435 U.S. 349 (1978). Plaintiff’s complaint against Defendant Isenhour should therefore be dismissed for this additional reason.

As a result, Plaintiff’s request to proceed *in forma pauperis* should not be countenanced, with the exception that *in forma pauperis* status shall be granted for the sole purpose of entering this Order and Recommendation.

Plaintiff has submitted the Complaint for filing, however, and, notwithstanding the preceding determination, § 1915(b)(1) requires that he make an initial payment of \$13.33. Failure to comply with this Order will lead to dismissal of the complaint.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that *in forma pauperis* status be granted for the sole purpose of entering this Order and Recommendation.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that within twenty (20) days from the date of this Order Plaintiff make an initial filing fee payment of \$13.33.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Plaintiff's trust officer shall be directed to pay to the Clerk of this Court 20% of all deposits to his account starting with the month of March of 2019, and thereafter each time that the amount in the account exceeds \$10.00 until the \$350.00 filing fee has been paid.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that this action be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A for being frivolous or malicious or for failing to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, as well as for seeking monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief.

This, the 5th day of February, 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe L. Webster", is written over a horizontal line.

Joe L. Webster  
United States Magistrate Judge